

Navigating Site Plan Review

WMPF LUTI
March 20, 2025



NPV

Tonight's Presentation

- **Site Plan Review**



Pre-Application Process

- **Pre-Application Meetings**
- **Vetting of Issues**
- **Understanding the Approval Process**



Application Process

- ***Initial Submission***

- Does the submission provide enough information to understand what approvals are needed?
- Do the plans provide enough information so the Board has an understanding of the project?

- ***Complete Application***

- Application should not be considered complete for voting until:
 - SEQR is completed
 - All studies and analyses have been submitted
 - All required plans are part of the submission



Site Plan Review Process - Relevant Topic Areas

Local Concerns

Zoning

Site Circulation

Site Engineering

Stormwater

Environmental Concerns

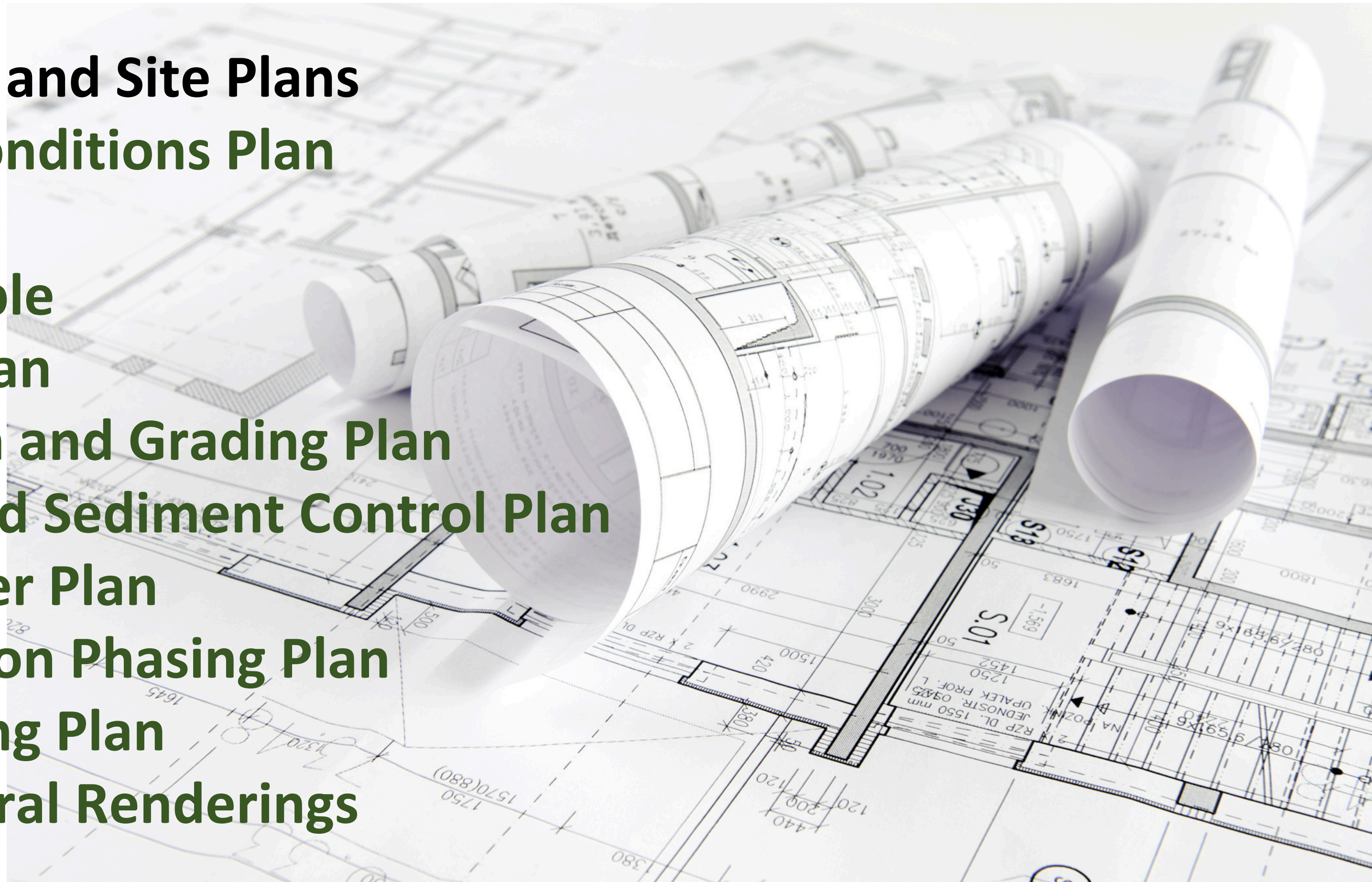
Design and Aesthetics



Site Plan Review Process – Common Plans/Information

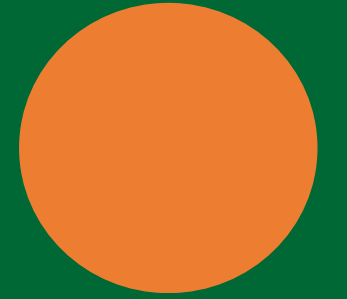
- **Architectural and Site Plans**

- Existing Conditions Plan
- Site Plan
- Zoning Table
- Utilities Plan
- Excavation and Grading Plan
- Erosion and Sediment Control Plan
- Stormwater Plan
- Construction Phasing Plan
- Landscaping Plan
- Architectural Renderings



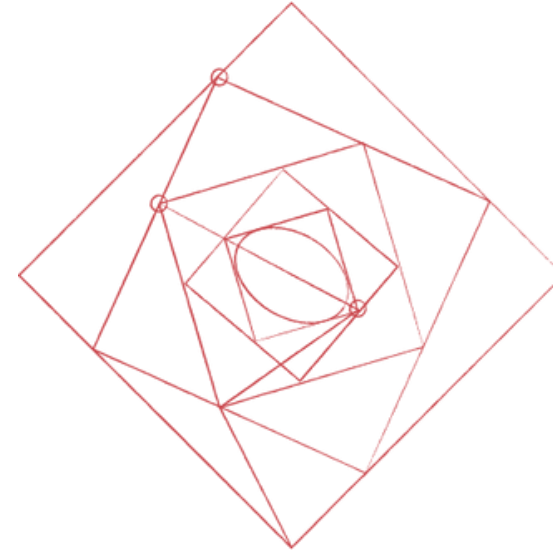
Site Plan Review Process

- **Plans and Studies**
 - **Wetlands Delineations**
 - **Wildlife and Habitat Assessments**
 - **Floodplain analysis**
 - **Utilities – Capacity Studies**
 - **Geotechnical Analysis**
 - **Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan**
 - **Noise Analysis**
 - **Air Analysis**
 - **Traffic Study**
 - **Fiscal Impacts**



Questions and Comments

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DESIGN REVIEW WITHIN THE MUNICIPAL APPROVALS PROCESS

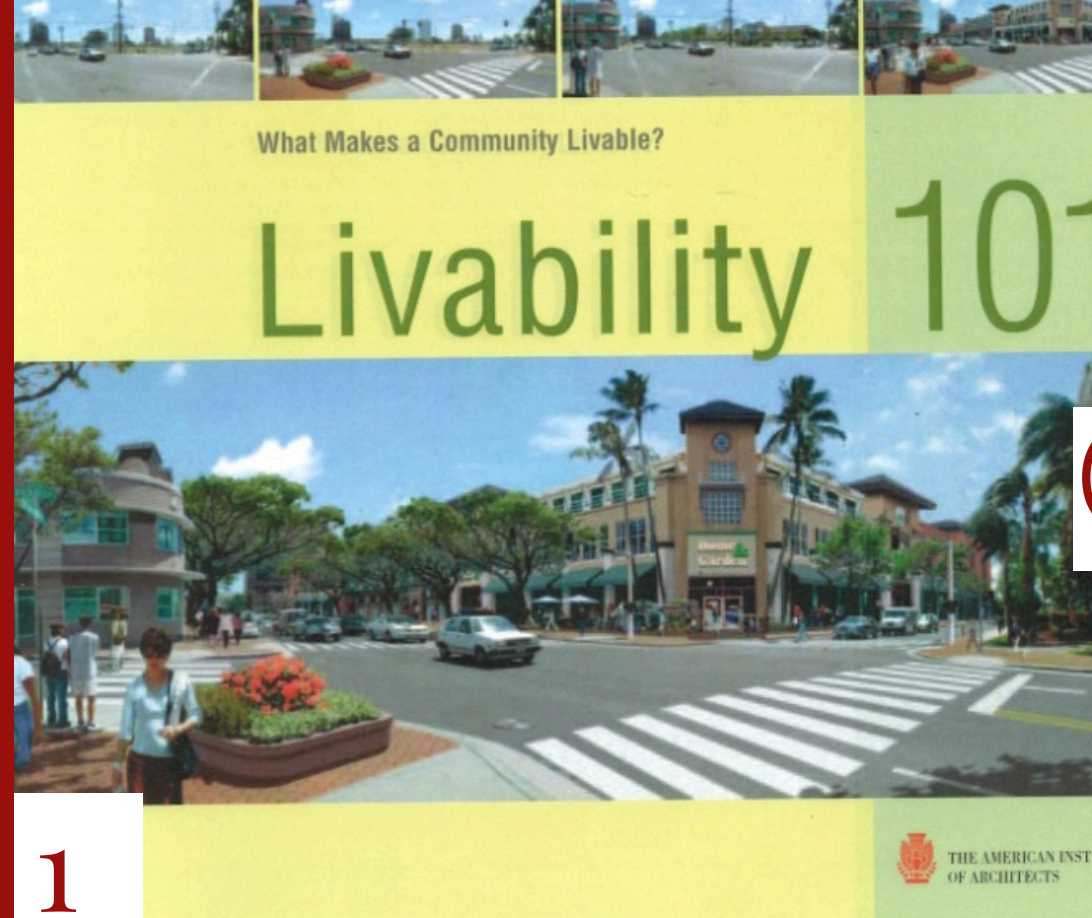
WESTCHESTER MUNICIPAL PLANNING FEDERATION LAND USE TRAINING INSTITUTE

Overview of Design Review Roles, Influence and Review Structure

NEXUS CREATIVE DESIGN | JOHN D. FRY, AIA

NEXUSCREATIVE.DESIGN

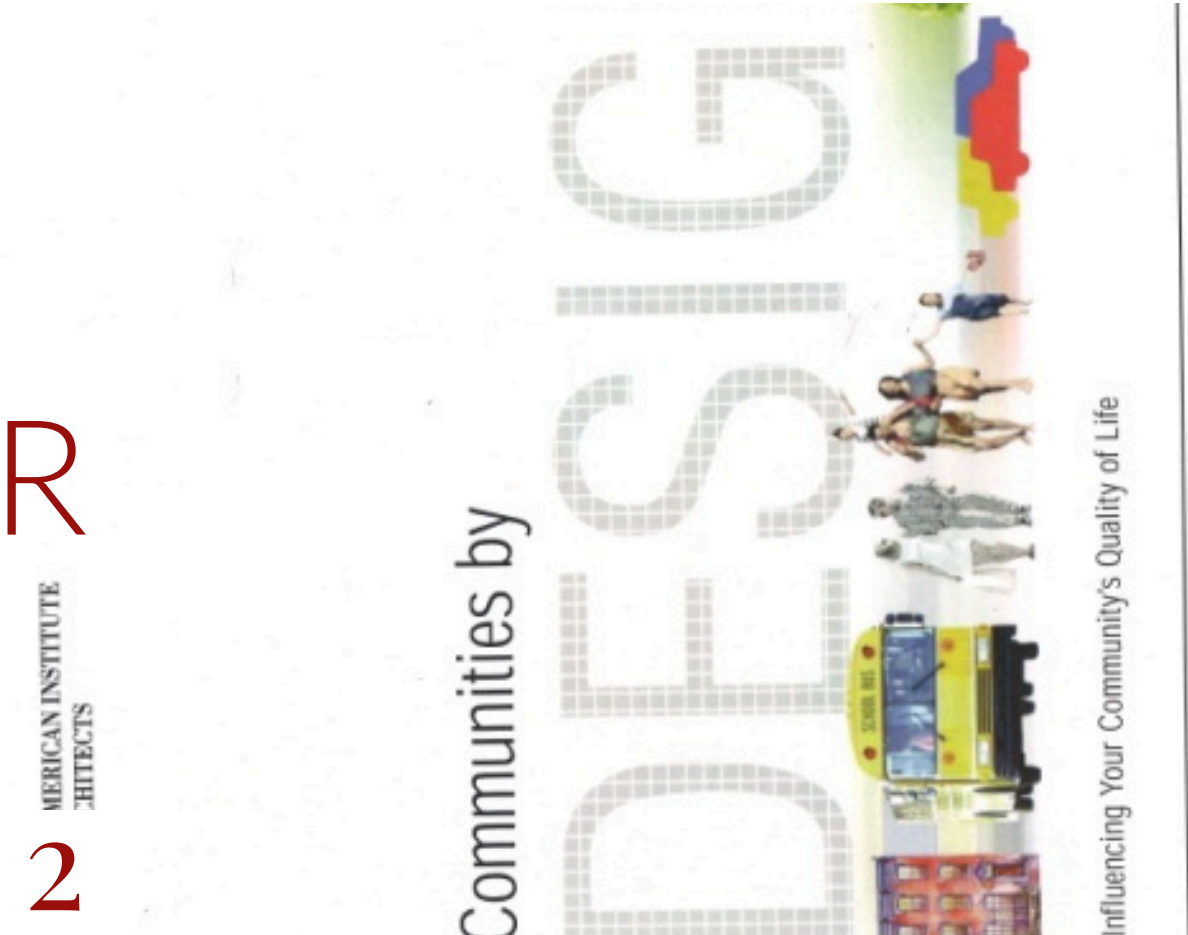
DESIGN REVIEW PATHS IN WESTCHESTER COMMUNITIES



1 INTEGRATED WITHIN THE PLANNING BOARD

- Planning Board conducts design review as part of their process (e.g., Village of Tuckahoe).
- Dual-role Planning Boards with separate agendas for planning and design (e.g., Villages of Ossining & Pleasantville).

OR



2 SEPARATE DESIGN REVIEW BOARD OR COMMITTEE

- Varied names and acronyms - Architectural Review Board (ARB), Board of Architectural Review (BAR), Design Review Committee, etc.
- Operates independently or as an advisory board.

APPLICANTS RECEIVE DESIGN REVIEW FEEDBACK IN DIFFERENT FORMS.



CHALLENGES IN DESIGN REVIEW



- Zoning codes attempt to establish review guidelines, but the language can vary significantly in the manner intent is articulated. Supporting zoning code text relating to design with supplemental documents such as ‘Design Guidelines’ or in specific chapters of a Comprehensive Plan best serve the community and the applicant.
- Depth, breadth and detail feedback varies by municipality and relevant review entity.
- Design resolution commentary is often informal and may occasionally be vaguely suggestive. In limited circumstances - subjective.
- Legal parameters are based on historic district law precedents which establish or delineate a surrounding context to gauge design features, stylistic elements, scale and detail.
- Whether the project is reviewed under SEQR Type 1 or Type 2 actions the NYS SEQR Workbook provides meaningful guidelines and structure for ‘design review’ under Visual Impacts sections.

Committee Mission Statement

(d) **Downtown Development.** Developer and the Village believe that the public good will be enhanced by improvements to downtown Ossining, and that such improvements will facilitate the objectives of the Waterfront Plan and the Site Plan, which include public access to and use of the Outlying waterfront. Developer agrees to work with the Greater Ossining Chamber of Commerce, and other community organizations designated by the Village to assist in implementing other downtown redevelopment projects. In furtherance of these objectives, Developer further agrees that, upon execution of this Agreement, it shall pay the non-refundable sum of Two Hundred Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$250,000.00) to the Village, which amount shall be credited against the Purchase Price, and which is to be deposited in a dedicated development fund to provide low interest loans for home improvements in the Downtown area (“Downtown Development Fund Payment”), or to fund other projects committed to improving the Downtown Area. The Downtown Development Fund Payment shall be administered by a three-person council (“Downtown Development Fund Council”) or other similar governance body. Two members of the Downtown Development Fund Council shall be nominated by the Village, and one member shall be nominated by Developer. The Downtown Development Fund Council shall be responsible for administering the Downtown Development Fund.

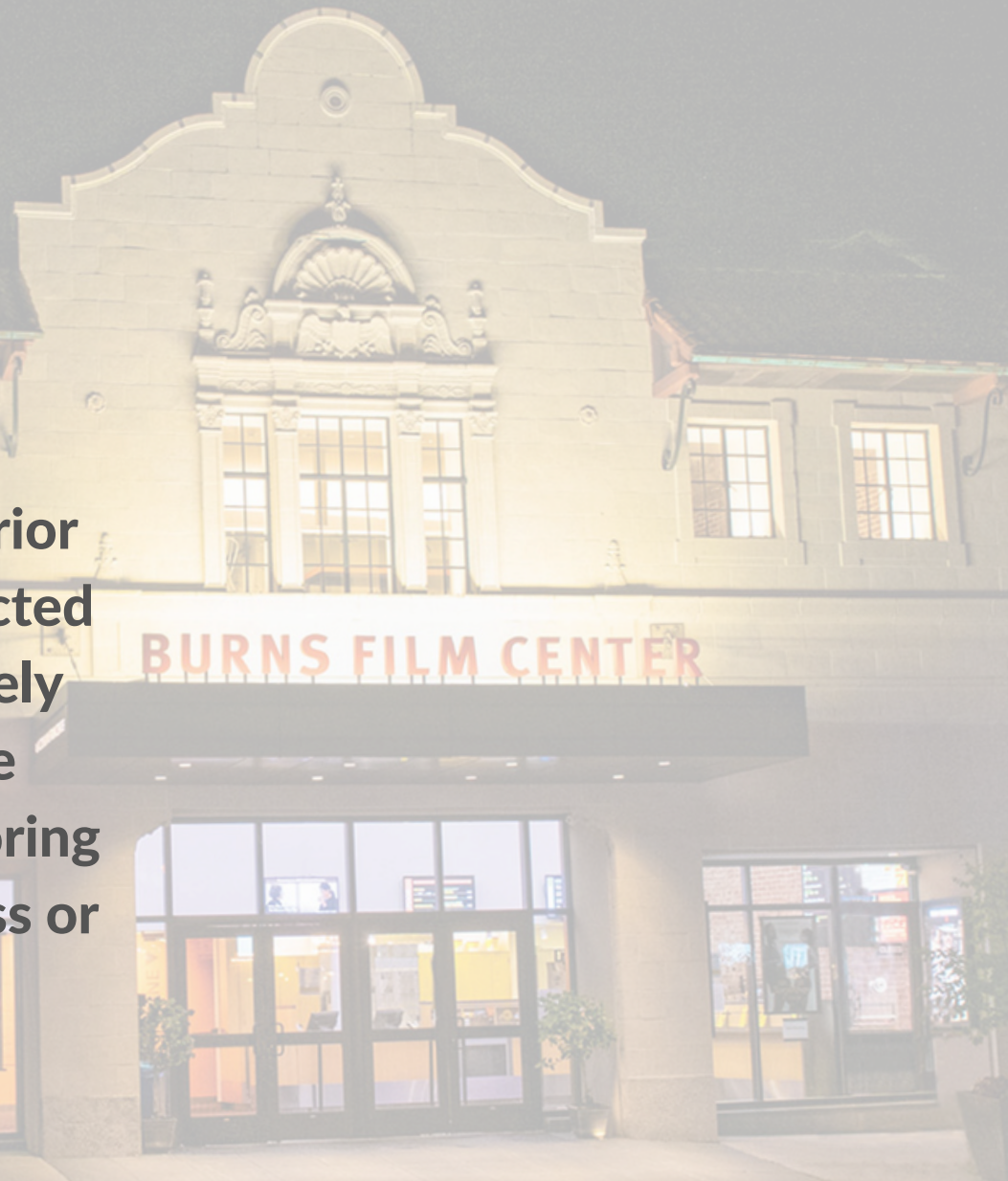


ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND INFLUENCE

- Most often Design Review entities review building designs, alterations, signage and exterior lighting. Often, landscape and other site features are also reviewed within the Design Review entity's purview.
- Focus on architectural harmony or resonating contrast within the applicant surroundings. Example zoning text design review parameters often loosely reflect the following directive ...

“

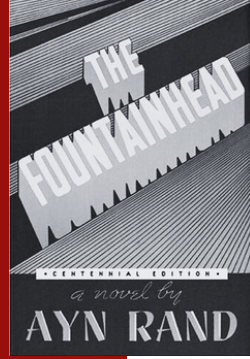
The Board of Architectural Review finds that excessive uniformity, dissimilarity, inappropriateness or poor quality of design in the exterior appearance of buildings erected in any neighborhood adversely affects the desirability of the immediate area and neighboring areas for residential, business or other purposes and ...



“

[Their] charge is to consider the appropriateness of proposed building, structure alterations or additions in relation to the established character of other structures in the immediate area and with respect to significant architectural features. In addition to the aesthetics of building construction, the Architectural Review Board is also responsible for reviewing and approving proposed signage in accordance with the Village's sign ordinance.





STRUCTURING EFFECTIVE DESIGN REVIEW COMMENTARY

- Avoid personal preference-based commentary, observations or recommendations.
- Instead of: "I don't like..." Use objective, contextual statements relating to scale, massing or volumetric patterns, glazing patterns and compositions, view sheds, material selections, shade/shadow casting and other broad based design notions,
- The most common and meaningful observations typically begin with "As it relates to the neighborhood..." the design is consistent with surrounding patterns and details" or "the design complements and resonates in a fresh manner" ... or "the design challenges the scale of the neighborhood and utilizes vocabularies inconsistent or in disharmony within the context of the proposed building".
- Establish clear thresholds for recommendations to avoid applicant-board conflicts.



DESIGN REVIEW & SEQR (STATE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY REVIEW)

- SEQR considers visual and aesthetic impacts as part of environmental review.
- “Environment” includes historic and aesthetic significance.
- Criteria for significance:
- Does it impair the character or quality of an important aesthetic resource?
- Who will be impacted by visual changes?

VISUAL & AESTHETIC IMPACTS

Considerations:

- Designation: Is the resource a protected scenic area?
- Visibility: How many people will be affected? [is the project visually prominent or relatively concealed]
- Context: Under what conditions will it be seen?
- Distance: How close is the viewer to the aesthetic resource?

SEQR and DEC Guidance on Visual Impacts

- NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Policy:
 - Identifies statewide and national aesthetic resources.
 - Guides local agencies in systematic assessment.
 - Encourages proactive visual resource planning.

COMMUNITY CHARACTER

01 COMMUNITY CHARACTER VS. VISUAL IMPACT

- Visual impact: Assesses aesthetic elements (e.g., scenic views, building design).
- Community character: Broader concept including built environment, zoning, and social functions.

02 AS AN ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUE

- Defined under NY State law (ECL 8-0105).
- Court decisions require consideration of community character in environmental reviews.
- Municipality's Comprehensive Plan & Zoning Code serve as references.

03 DETERMINING SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS

- Comprehensive Plans & Zoning Codes shape community expectations.
- Other Planning Resources: Local Waterfront Revitalization Plans, Heritage Area Plans, Greenway Plans.
- Without supporting planning and design documents, determining significance can be challenging.



EVOLVING DESIGN VISUALIZATION TECHNIQUES AND TECHNOLOGY

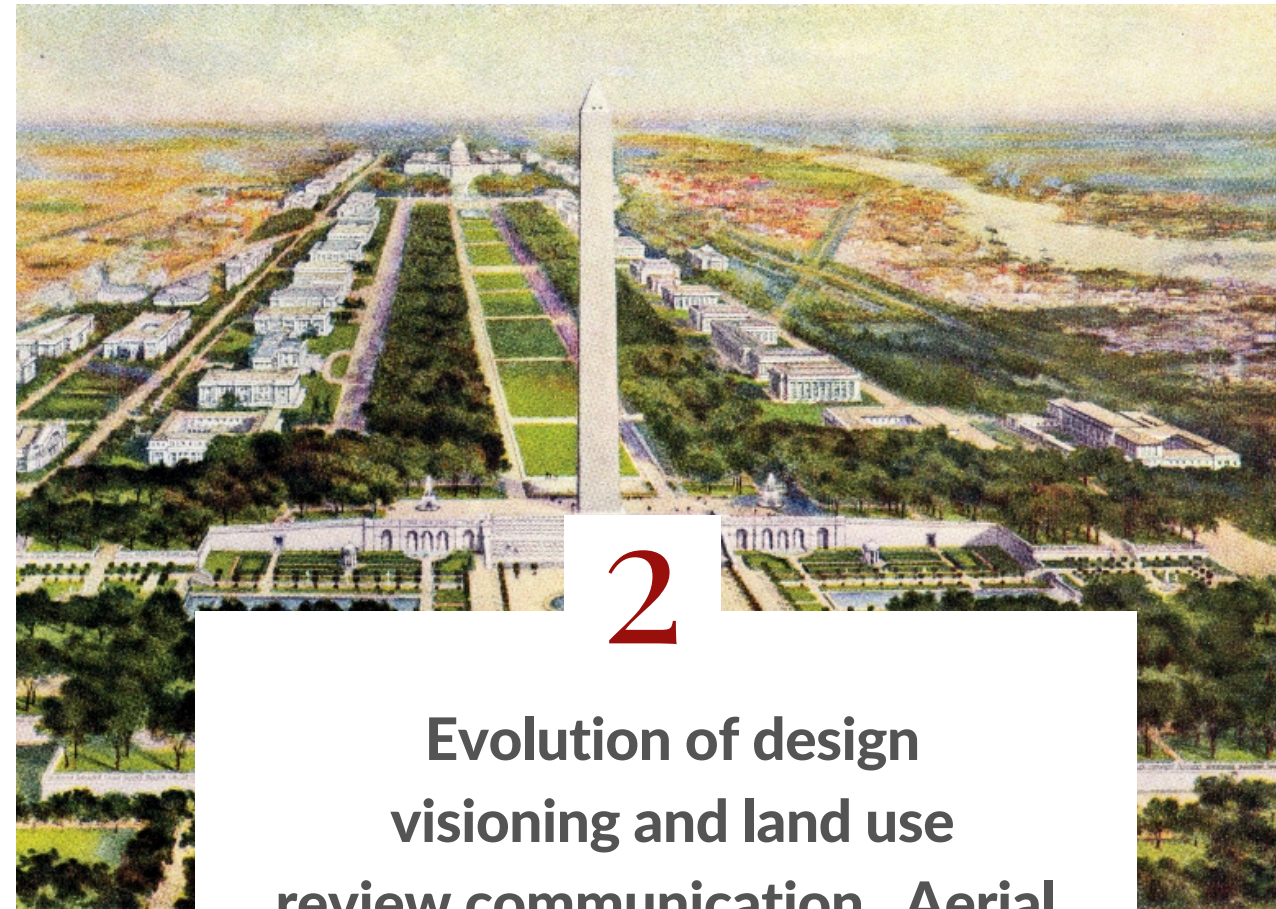
Effective presentation techniques enhance Review Board's ability to visualize design decisions.

How are the levels of visualization material influenced by municipal submission standards or specific Review Board requests.



1

Traditional two- and three-dimensional design, land use documentation focusing on visual communication techniques relied upon for centuries.



2

Evolution of design visioning and land use review communication. Aerial and enhanced color rendered techniques in conjunction with easily accessed Google Earth contextual visuals



3

Emerging technologies ... the future is here for next generation design and visualization ... virtual reality visualization and 'walk throughs'.

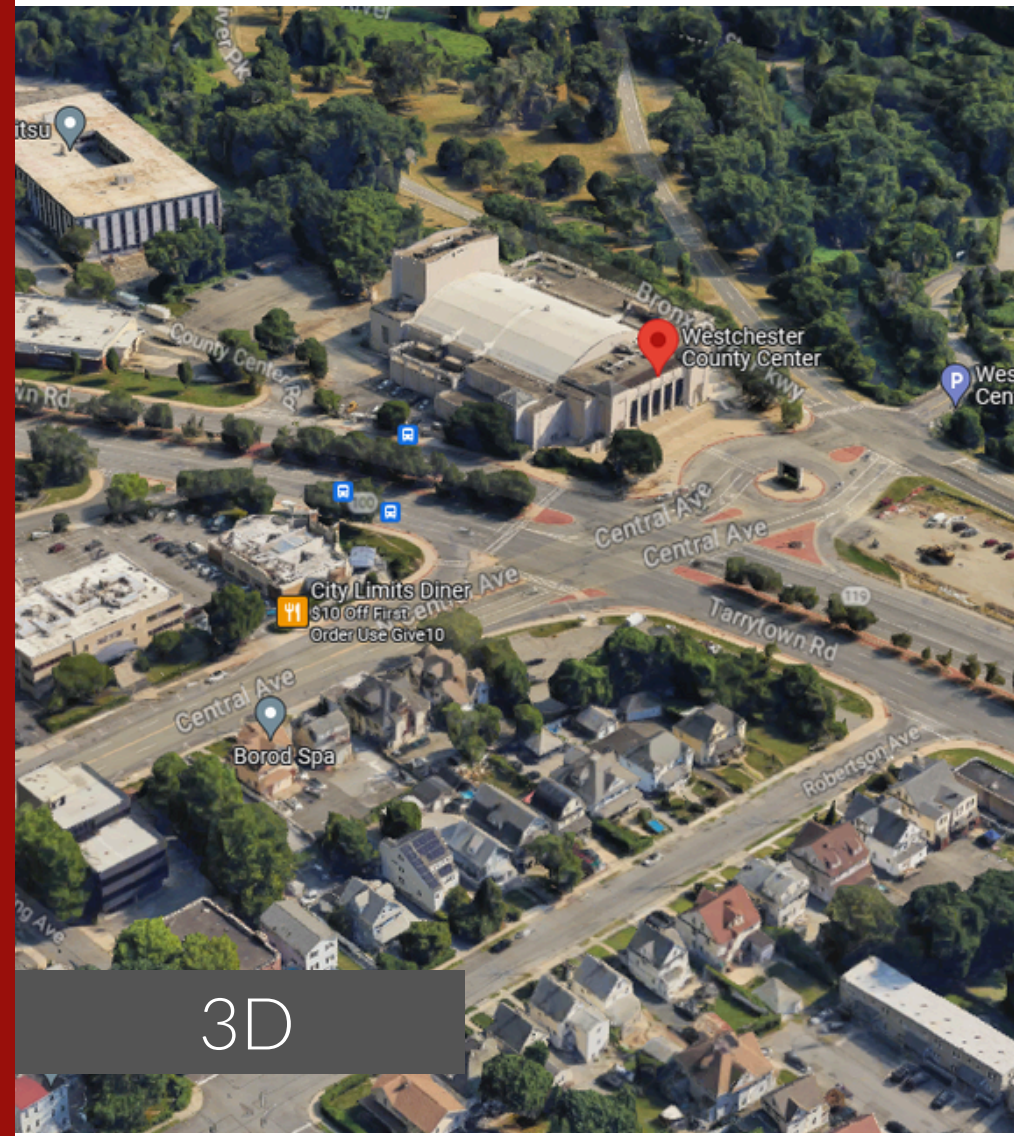
GOOGLE TOOLS

The world according to Google:

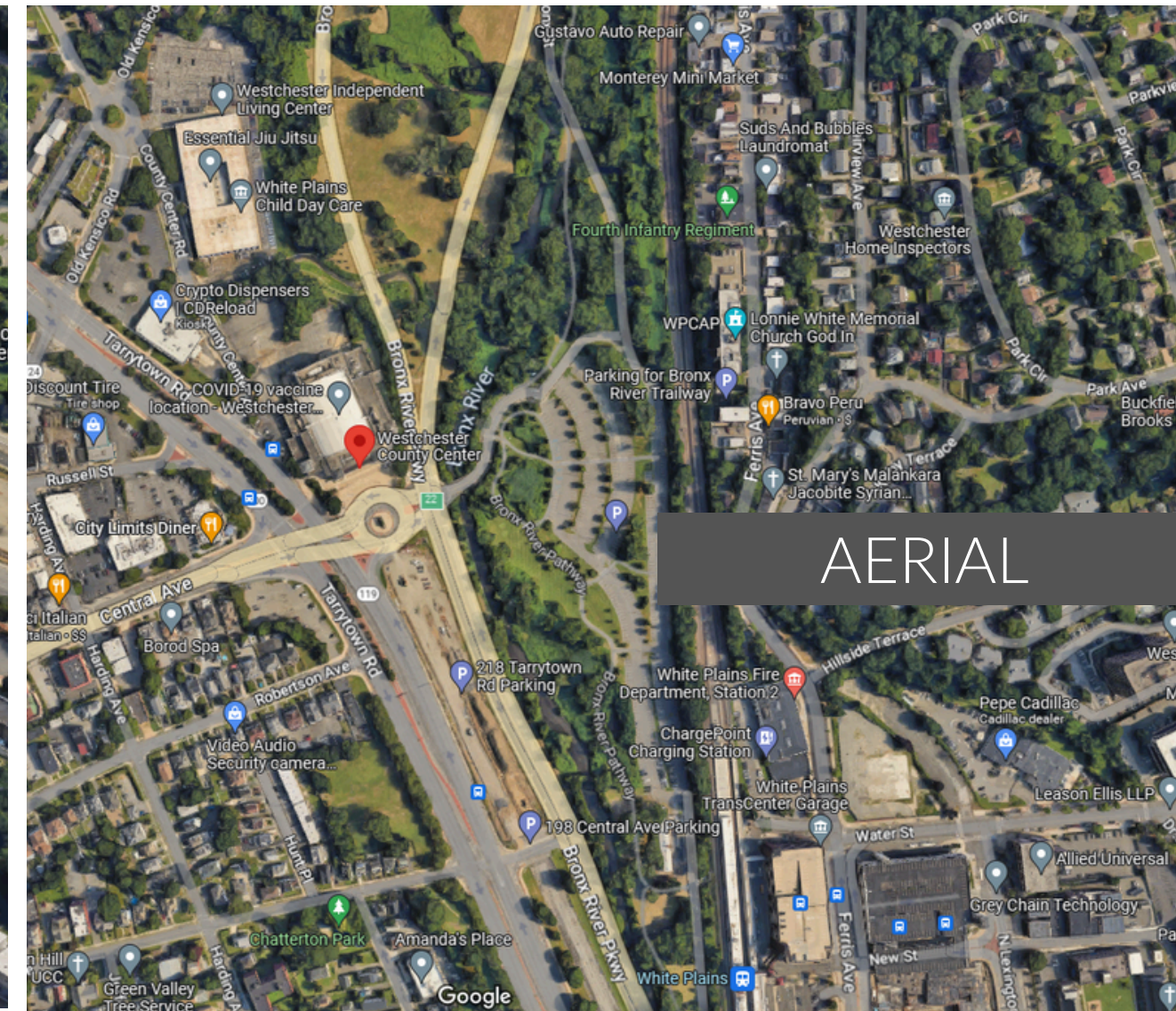
- Google Earth Maps
- Google 3D Maps
- Google Street View
- Google Volumetric Metrics



STREET VIEW



3D



AERIAL

EVOLVING METHODOLOGY

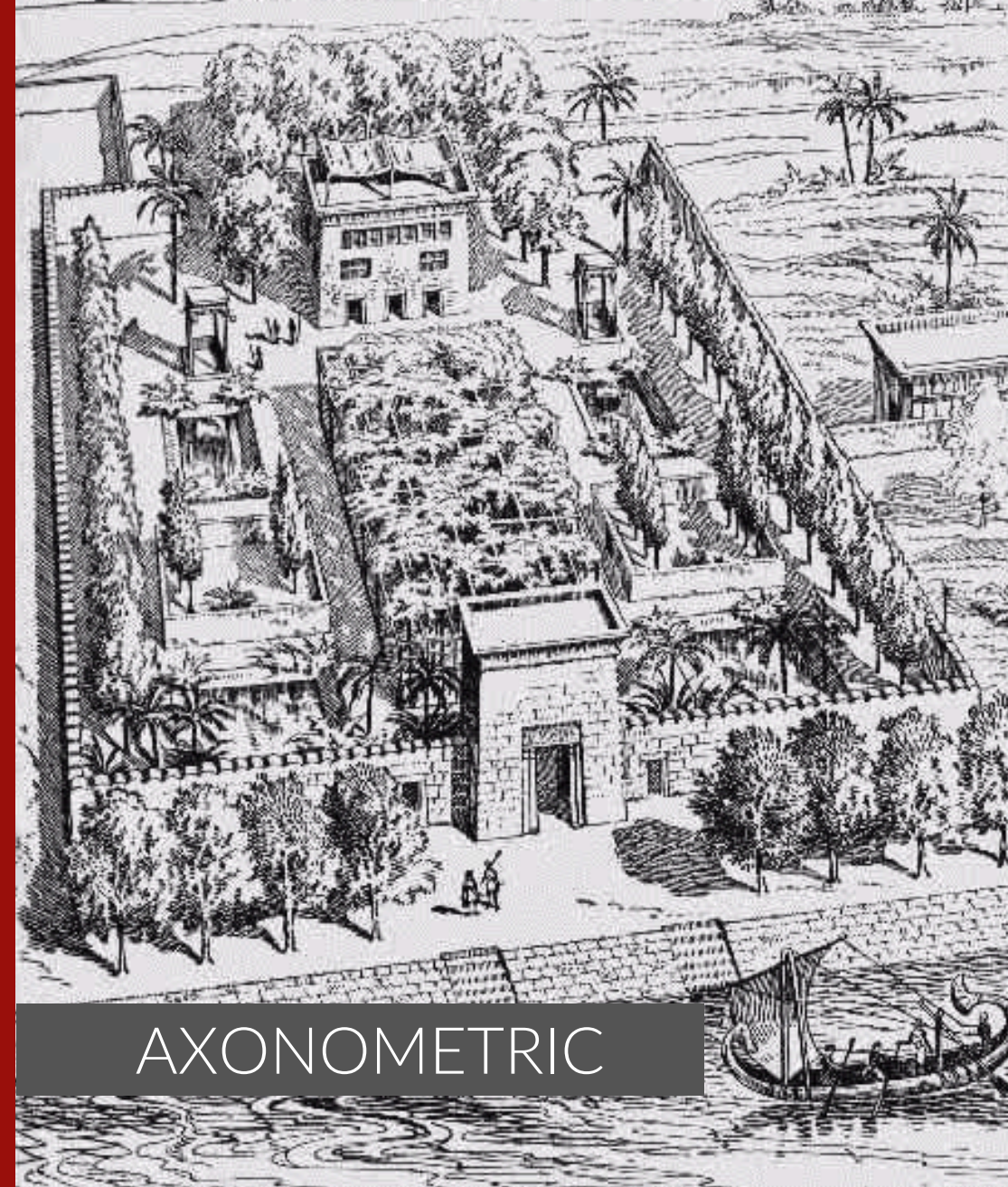
Historically much of this interface has been facilitated by plan graphics as micro and macro design communication tools and/or axonometric image tools and static perspectives.

- **Static Perspectives**
- **Axonometric**
- **Plan & Elevation Graphics**

Design and Land Use visualization review have utilized numerous graphic methodologies throughout history towards depicting anticipated built environment outcomes.

Plan, section and elevation graphics have been predominantly relied upon for depiction and visually communicating. Stationary view 3D perspectives were laboriously created and rendered supporting visualization.

PLANS +
ELEVATIONS



AXONOMETRIC



MASTER PLAN



STATIC PERSPECTIVE

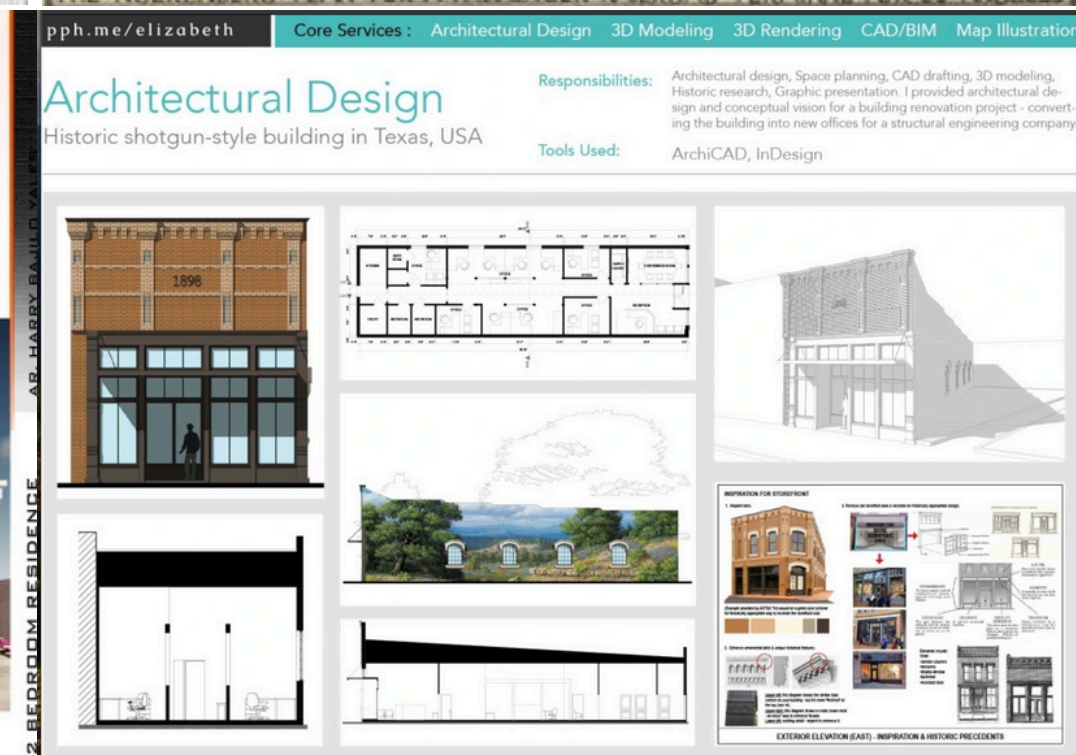


FRONT ELEVATION

RIGHT ELEVATION

FLOOR PLAN

PERSPECTIVE VIEW



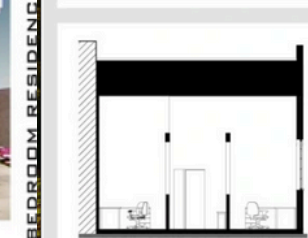
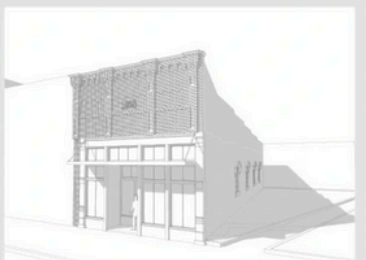
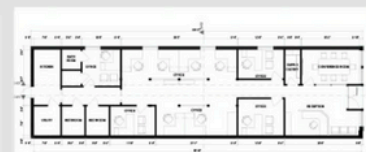
pph.me/elizabeth

Core Services: Architectural Design 3D Modeling 3D Rendering CAD/BIM Map Illustration

Architectural Design
Historic shotgun-style building in Texas, USA

Responsibilities: Architectural design, Space planning, CAD drafting, 3D modeling, Historic research, Graphic presentation. I provided architectural design and conceptual vision for a building renovation project - converting the building into new offices for a structural engineering company.

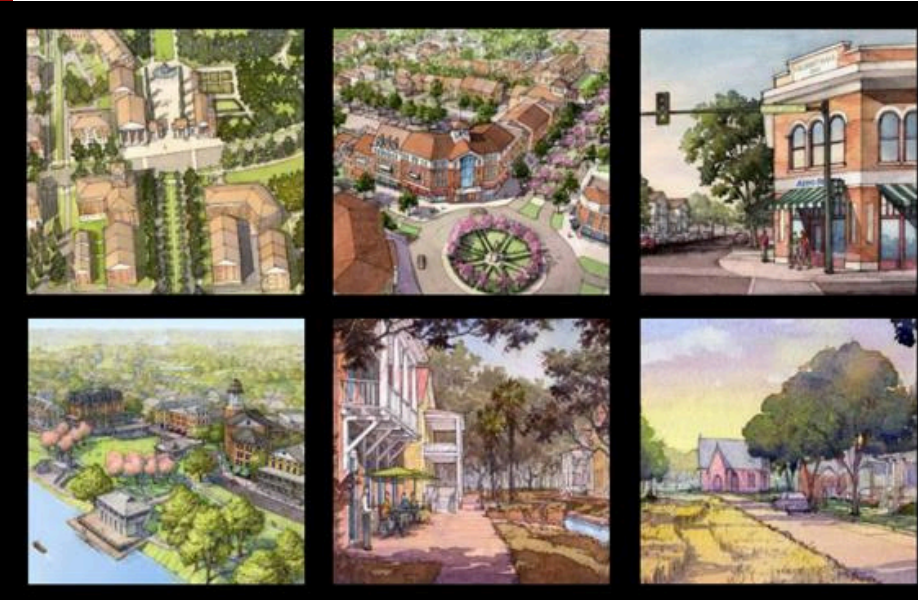
Tools Used: ArchiCAD, InDesign



EVOLVING METHODOLOGY

Ranges of techniques have emerged over time...from photo realism to more artful presentation.

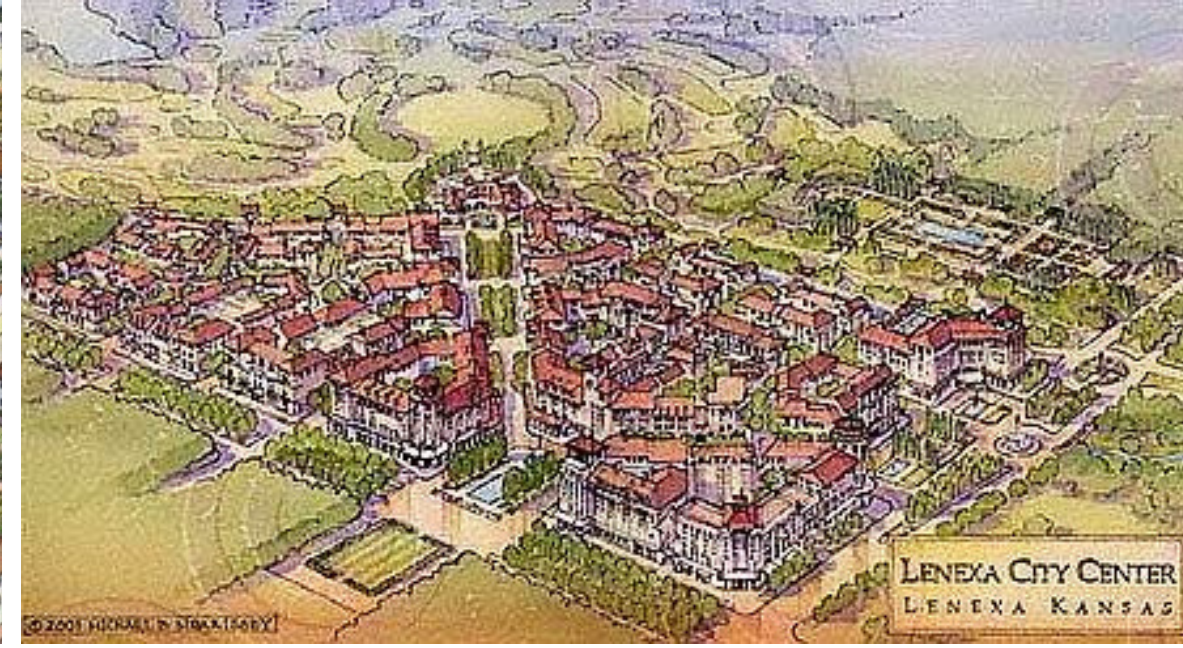
- **Site and building modeling via Revit or similar software.**
- **Google Earth image captures with layered rendering techniques.**



EVOLVING METHODOLOGY

Integration of context and site analysis.

- **Municipal/GIS base plan data.**
- **AutoCAD/other plan/elevation data.**
- **Photo survey/established station point views.**
- **Rendering via various software, filters/techniques or 'hand-rendered'.**



EXISTING



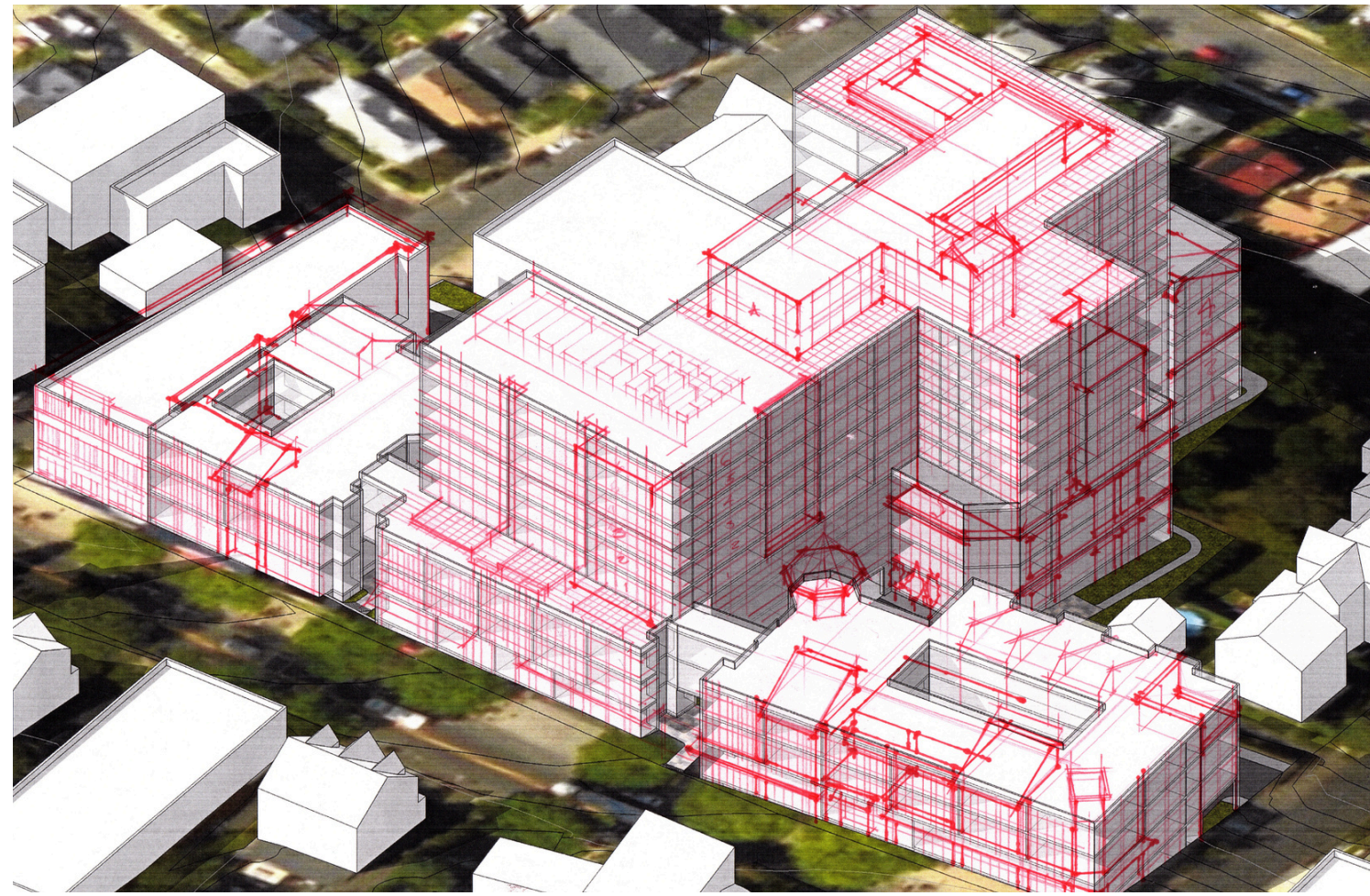
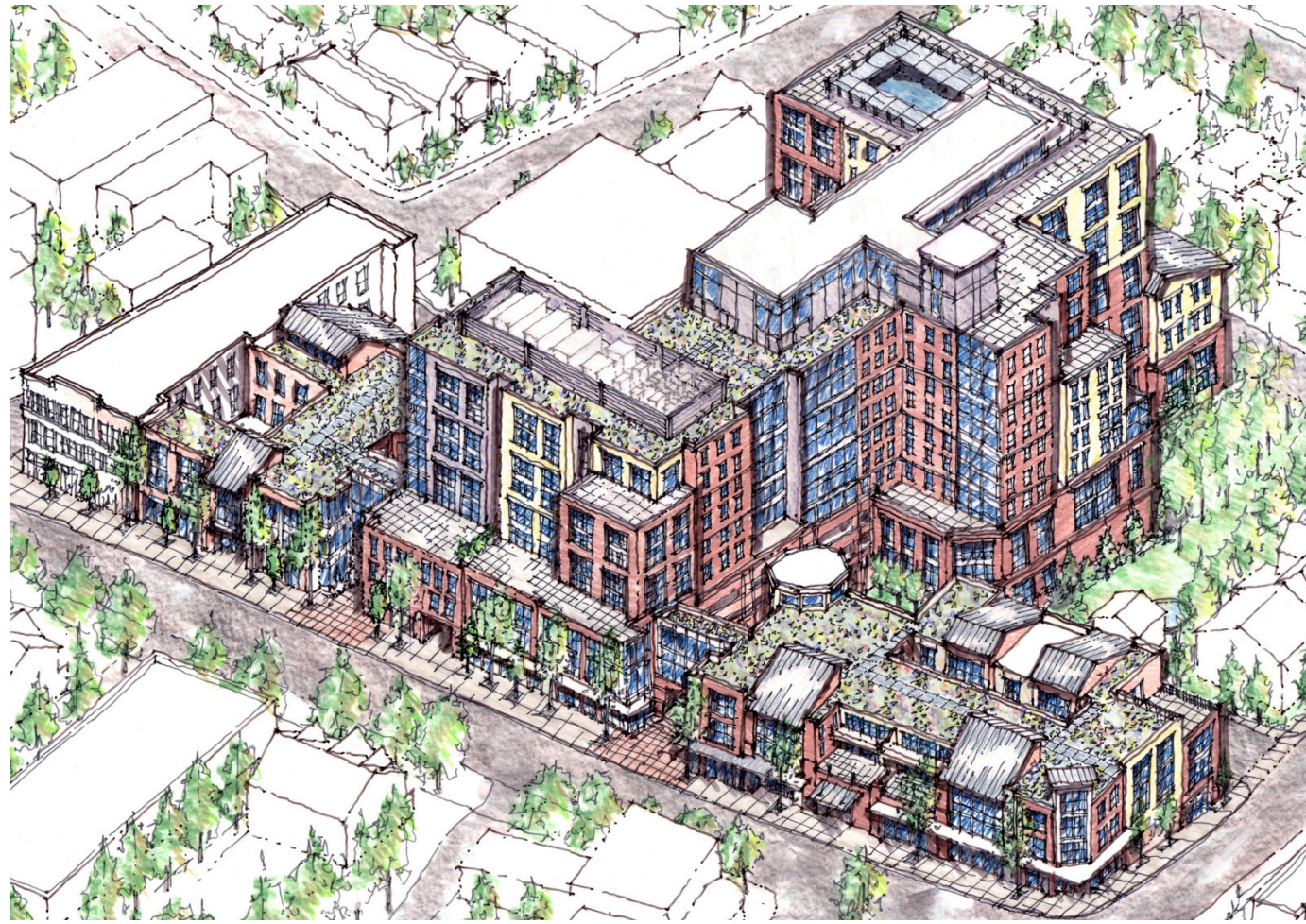
PROPOSED





**Complex visualizations
achieve via numerous
integrated site context
and building modeling
software.**

EXAMPLE OF PLATEAU TECHNOLOGY AND TECHNOLOGY



AGILE REFINEMENTS BETWEEN INFORMAL 'SKETCH PLAN' REVIEW AND FORMAL SUBMISSION



LAND USE DESIGN, REVIEW AND VISUALIZATION MESH POINTS

Application submission materials, municipal/staff review, municipal consultant review, land use board or commission review, stakeholder/public review.

Municipal Land Use review boards, stake holders and end users have access to the next generation of emerging technology in unprecedented levels compared to the past 50 years of visualization.

ADVANCED TOOLS AND RESOURCES INCLUDE...



...AND IT IS HAPPENING RIGHT HERE.

A New Approach in New Roc City

New Rochelle, New York, launches a virtual reality platform to visualize planned downtown improvements

By Matt Hickman • September 16, 2020 • [East](#), [News](#), [Technology](#), [Urbanism](#)



the LINC workshops
by the numbers

March 4th + 6th, 2023

- 180+ attendees
- 50+ exit surveys
- 25+ recorded oral histories
- 2 workshops
- 7 hours of engagement
- 300 community comments

Super excited to see how all the suggestions are integrated into the design!

The staff was super helpful and friendly!

I really enjoyed all of the exhibits.

The "Design the LINC" and "Impressions Wall" made me feel heard.

I'm happy that my town is going to look much better! I'm a resident here for 47 years. I love New Rochelle!

Perfectly planned + executed. Really impressed and should be a model for other cities. Appreciate the level of community engagement. Thank you for doing this.

Your LINC. Your words.



WESTCHESTER COUNTY'S RICH, DIVERSE AND MULTILAYERED COMMUNITY FABRIC

46 COMMUNITY PLANNING LAND USE BOARDS + 42 DESIGN REVIEW ENTITIES

36 "Hamlets"

- [1] Archville, New York [Town of Mt Pleasant]
- [2] Armonk, New York [Town of North Castle]
- [3] Banksville, New York [Town of North Castle]
- [4] Bedford (CDP), New York [Town of Bedford]
- [5] Bedford Corners, New York [Town of Bedford]
- [6] Bedford Hills, New York [Town of Bedford] [MN Harlem Line]
- [7] Chappaqua, New York [Town of New Castle] [MN Harlem Line]
- [8] Cooper's Corners [City of New Rochelle]
- [9] Cortlandt Manor [Town of Courtlandt]
- [10] Crestwood [City of Yonkers]
- [11] Cross River [Town of Lewisboro]
- [12] Crugers [Town of Courtlandt]
- [13] Eastview [Town of Mt Pleasant] [Old Putnam Line]
- [14] Fairview [Town of Greenburgh]
- [15] Goldens Bridge [Town of Lewisboro] [MN Harlem Line]
- [16] Granite Springs [Town of Somers] [Old Putnam Line]
- [17] Hartsdale [Town of Greenburgh]
- [18] Hawthorne [Town of Mt Pleasant] [MN Harlem Line]
- [19] Heritage Hills [Town of Somers]
- [20] Katonah [Town of Bedford] [MN Harlem Line]
- [21] Lincolndale [Town of Somers]
- [22] Middletown [City of New Rochelle]
- [23] Millwood [Town of New Castle] [Old Putnam Line]
- [36] Waccabuc [Town of Lewisboro]

Former Old Putnam Line stations not included in 'Hamlets' – Lincoln/Dunwoodie/Bryn Mawr Park/Nepperham/Gray Oaks/Nepera Park – **Yonkers**; Chauncey/Ardsley/Woodlands/Worthington – **Town of Greenburgh**; Beaver Hill/East View/Graham – **Town of Mt Pleasant**; Kitchawan/Croton Lake/Croton Heights/Amawalk – **Town of Yorktown**; and **Westchester/Putnam border communities** Baldwin Place/Lake Mahopac/Mahopac/Mahopac Falls/Mahopac Mines/Crafts/Carmel/Tilly Foster/Brewster

- 5 Harrison, Town of
 - [11] Harrison, Village of Town/Village PB + ARB [MN New Haven Line]
- 6 Lewisboro, Town of PB + Architecture and Community Appearance Review Council
- 7 Mamaroneck, Town of PB + BAR [MN New Haven Line]
 - [12] Larchmont, Village of PB + ARB [MN New Haven Line]
 - [13] Mamaroneck, Village of PB + ARB [MN New Haven Line]
- 8 Mount Kisco, Town of
 - [14] Mount Kisco, Village of Village/Town PB + BAR [MN Harlem Line]
- 9 Mount Pleasant, Town of PB + ARB
 - [15] Briarcliff Manor, Village of PB + Architectural Review Advisory Committee [Old Putnam Line]
 - [16] Pleasantville, Village of PB/ARB combined board roles [MN Harlem Line]
 - [17] Sleepy Hollow, Village of PB + ARB
- 10 New Castle, Town of PB+ BAR
- 11 North Castle, Town of PB + BAR
- 12 North Salem, Town of PB + ARB [advisory]
- 13 Ossining, Town of
 - [18] Ossining, Village of PB/BAR combined roles + HPC [MN Hudson Line + Scarborough & Philips Manor stations]
- 14 Pelham, Town of
 - [19] Pelham, Village of PB + ARB
 - [20] Pelham Manor, Village of PB [MN New Haven Line]
- 15 Pound Ridge, Town of PB
- 16 Rye, Town of [PB/BAR via City of Rye] [MN New Haven Line]
 - [21] Port Chester, Village of [MN New Haven Line]
 - [22] Rye Brook, Village of PB + ARB
- 17 Scarsdale, Town of
 - [23] Scarsdale, Village of PB + BAR [MN Harlem Line]
- 18 Somers, Town of PB + ARB [MN via Purdys/Croton Falls]
- 19 Yorktown, Town of PB + Advisory Board on Architecture & Community Appearance [Old Putnam Line]

6 'Cities' with 5 Planning Boards, 1 Planning Commission and 5 Design Review Entities - 1 ARB/1 BAR/2 DRB, 1 PARC and 1 combined ADR

- 1 Mount Vernon, City of PB + ARB [MN New Haven Line]
- 2 New Rochelle, City of PB + PARC [Professional Architectural Review Committee] + Historical and Landmarks Review Board [MN New Haven Line]
- 3 Peekskill, City of Planning Commission + advisory design review [MN Hudson Line]
- 4 Rye, City of PB + BAR [MN New Haven Line]
- 5 White Plains, City of PB + DRB [Design Review Bd] [MN Harlem Line + North White Plains]
- 6 Yonkers, City of PB + DRB [Design Review Board] [MN Hudson Line + Glenwood & Greysonts]

14 'Towns' - '23 Villages' 26 Design Review boards/commissions/committees and 11 Planning Boards with combined roles.

- 1 Bedford, Town of PB + Bedford Village Historic District Review Commission
- 2 Cortlandt, Town of PB + Architectural Advisory Council
 - [1] Buchanan, Village of PB with design review role [Hudson Line via Courtlandt station]
 - [2] Croton-on-Hudson, Village of PB + Advisory Board on the Visual Environment [MN Hudson Line]
- 3 Eastchester, Town of PB + ARB
 - [3] Bronxville, Village of PB + ARB [former MN New Haven Line]
 - [4] Tuckahoe, Village of PB/AR combined roles [MN Harlem Line + Crestwood station]
- 4 Greenburgh, Town of PB + Historic & Landmark Preservation Bd
 - [5] Ardsley, Village of PB + BAR [MN Hudson Line] [Old Putnam Line]
 - [6] Dobbs Ferry, Village of PB + Architectural and Historic Review Bd [MN Hudson Line]
 - [7] Elmsford, Village of PB + ARC [Architectural Review Commission] [Old Putnam Line]
 - [8] Hastings-on-Hudson, Village of PB + ARB [MN Hudson Line]
 - [9] Irvington, Village of PB + ARB [MN Hudson Line]
 - [10] Tarrytown, Village of PB + ARB [MN Hudson Line]

